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WORKERS WORLD

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JUNE 10, 2010 Vol. 52, No. 22 50¢

After Israeli terror attack on aid convoy

World demands 'End blockade of Gaza!'

By LeiLani Dowell

May 31 — A firestorm of condemnation and protest has followed Israel's latest brutality — the massacre of at least 9 unarmed activists by the Israeli navy in international waters north of Gaza. The activists were part of a 750-member delegation on a six-boat flotilla attempting to bring humanitarian aid to the besieged people of Gaza.

The Freedom Flotilla was the largest attempt to date in the growing movement to break a three-year blockade of Gaza by Israel. Led by the Free Gaza Movement and Insani Yardim Vakfi, a Turkish organization, the flotilla carried some 10,000

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Times Square, New York, May 31.

The Hague, Netherlands

WW PHOTO: G. DUNKEL

ISRAEL FACES GLOBAL ANGER 11

200,000 march against Arizona racism

By Paul Teitelbaum
Phoenix

A massive march filled the streets of downtown Phoenix on May 29 as close to 200,000 people gathered to denounce the racist SB 1070 law and show their determination to fight back against this anti-immigrant attack. The streets were packed from curb to curb for over three miles as demonstrators made their way along the six-mile route that began at Steele Indian School Park, snaked its way through downtown and ended at the state Capitol building.

People began gathering at the park at about 6 a.m. and by 8:30 a.m. the opening rally got underway. The emcees for the opening rally were two children, a girl and a boy — both 8 years old — who led the crowd in chants of "No SB 1070!" and "¡Sí se puede!" Notable speakers included Isabel García of Tucson, who addressed the crowd in Spanish and said, "We will not have border militarization! We will not have criminalization of those who want to work!"

Two Black women from New Orleans spoke. They were Katrina survivors who have experienced racist oppression similar in some ways to what has been unleashed in Arizona. After recounting the horrors that the Black population of New Orleans faced in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, they told the crowd, "You're not alone. We got your back, Arizona! We got your back! We are going to make sure that SB 1070 becomes BS 1070!"

Indigenous members of the Tohono O'odham Nation, whose traditional lands exist on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, explained the irony of how they, the original inhabitants of this continent, would be subjected to the racial profiling of SB 1070 because they are a brown-skinned people. They went on to say that all those of European descent who have migrated to southern Arizona are here as guests of the Indigenous people, who have been living on these lands, caring for them and living in harmony with them, for thousands of years. The Tohono O'odham elders then gave a traditional blessing and left the stage to lead the march on its six-mile journey.

The march itself had contingents from all across the country, including BAYAN-USA, the International Action Center and the May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights. Groups from the California cities of Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego as well as groups from as far away as New Orleans and Maryland were there. The increasing temperature did not affect the spirits of the marchers, who kept up their militant chanting for the entire march route. When the march passed the Wells Fargo building in downtown Phoenix, where racist Sheriff Joe Arpaio maintains an office, marchers stopped and directed their chants against Arpaio, shouting, "Hey! Hey! Ho! Ho! Joe Arpaio has got to go!"

Marchers began arriving at the Capitol building at about noon, filling the Capitol grounds. It was two hours later when the tail end of the march reached the Capitol. Demonstrators remained at the Capitol grounds for the rest of the afternoon.

Which way forward

On the evening of May 29 and all day on May 30 several activist meetings focused on determining the next phase of the struggle against SB 1070 and for immigrant rights. The concerns raised repeatedly in these meetings were the need for unity and the need for the immigrant and oppressed community to act in their own independent interests.

The role that some groups play in the movement for immigrant reform was raised. Many of these groups, while doing some important work in the community, have attempted to divert the anger against SB1070 into waiting for yet another elec-

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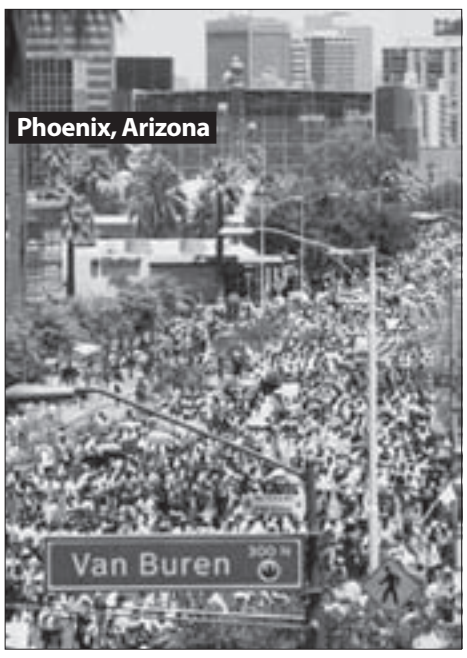

Phoenix, Arizona

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WW PHOTO: MONICA MOOREHEAD

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MICHIGAN STRUGGLES ROUNDUP

Justice for Aiyana Jones

The Detroit Coalition Against Police Brutality and the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War & Injustice held a joint demonstration outside police headquarters on May 27. The action was in response to the police killing of 7-year-old Aiyana Jones during an early morning raid on May 16.

About 30 people protested outside prior to the weekly Board of Police Commissioners meeting where Detroit Police Chief Warren Evans was present. A delegation from the protest addressed the community concerns directly to the board. Chief Evans dismissed them as unsubstantiated and unfounded but agreed to meet with DCAPB.

The demonstration demanded justice for Jones and the enforcement of two federal consent decrees mandating reforms involving the use of lethal force and detention facilities. Speakers included Cora Mitchell, whose son was tazed to death; Ron Scott from DCAPB; Abayomi Azikiwe from MECAWI, who pointed out that Detroiters need jobs, not police terror; and Rich Feldman.

Detroit police have maintained that the shooting was an accident. However, these law-enforcement actions have drawn protest and condemnation throughout the country.

WW PHOTO: ABAYOMI AZIKIWE

Abeer Afana, May 27.

Separate and unequal

Wayne State University student Abeer Afana and seven other students in a summer study-abroad program got an unscheduled lesson at Ben Gurion Airport in the settler state of Israel. On May 16 Afana was interrogated for hours and put on a return flight to Detroit. Afana is U.S.-born and travels on a U.S. passport. Nonetheless, she was refused entry by the Israeli authorities because she is of Palestinian descent and her family is from Gaza.

A May 27 Detroit press conference called by the Palestine Cultural Office and supported by the National Lawyers Guild, MECAWI and Michigan Coalition for Human Rights condemned the outrageous treatment of a young woman whose education was denied. An Associated Press report exposed, "The U.S. Department of State's consular affairs website warns travelers that Israel will 'consider as Palestinian anyone who has a Palestinian identification number, was born in the West Bank or Gaza, or was born in the United States but has parents or grandparents who were born or lived in the West Bank or Gaza.'

"It says such Americans must travel to Israel using their Palestinian passports, regardless of their U.S. citizenship, and that they 'may be barred from entering or exiting Israel, the West Bank or Gaza.'" (tinyurl.com/22vt9ye)

Statewide fight for quality education

On May 24 the Michigan Federation of Teachers and Michigan Education Association said, "Enough is enough!" Thousands of their members, students, parents and community mobilized to protest the budget cuts hitting 80 percent of the state's school districts, both urban and rural. In Detroit, teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, school support workers and other opponents of education cuts rallied at the Detroit Federation of Teachers office. The two unions plan more actions in June and throughout the summer. (mea.org/Enough/index.html)

Detroit resistance to education cuts continued on May 27 when Cass Tech High students marched more than a mile, led by the school's marching band, to the School Board meeting at Spain Middle School. A plan by state-appointed financial manager Robert Bobb proposes to eliminate public funding for any surviving music and fine arts programs in individual schools; close scores of schools; lay off an undetermined number of teachers; and cut summer school from five days to three days for severely disabled children, endangering their progress. Two thousand layoff notices have been issued. Bobb's six-figure salary is partially underwritten by private foundations promoting charter schools.

Michigan violates treaty rights for mining giant

On May 27 heavily armed Michigan State and local police arrested Keweenaw Bay Indian Community members Chris Chosa and Charlotte Loonsfoot to clear the way for international mining giant Rio Tinto to extract copper, nickel and sulfide at Eagle Rock in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. In a self-serving insult to Indigenous people, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality denied that Eagle Rock deserved special protection as a "place of worship" because "Eagle Rock is not a building used for human occupancy." (tinyurl.com/23pku53)

The battle to preserve Native rights and the environmentally sensitive water source for both Superior and Michigan great lakes goes to the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing at 11 a.m. on June 3. For more information, visit standfortheland.com.

— Cheryl LaBash and Abayomi Azikiwe

PHOTO: MICHIGAN EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Lansing, Mich. rally, May 24.

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In Chicago firefighter jobs case

A legal victory for affirmative action

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Applicants for firefighting jobs in Chicago were jubilant after a May 24 Supreme Court ruling that stated they did not wait too long to seek legal redress after a 1995 test proved to be discriminatory against African Americans. The decision allowed the case of some 6,000 African Americans to proceed.

The high court ruling is the second in recent times related to discrimination in firefighting. In an earlier ruling in 2009, based on a suit filed by white firefighters in New Haven, Conn., the court in a 5-4 ruling said that the test that had been deemed discriminatory should not have been thrown out.

According to the city of Chicago's corporation counsel, Mara Georges, the ruling may place the municipality in a legal bind, costing enormous sums of money to come into compliance with the Supreme Court decision. Georges says that the decision puts the city in a "Catch-22."

"Use the exam results, which have an adverse impact, and risk lawsuits from the group adversely impacted. Or disregard the exam results and risk lawsuits from those who stand to benefit from the results," said Georges. (Chicago Tribune, May 24)

The Supreme Court decision could result in the hiring of 120 African Americans by the fire department. Moreover, despite the 15-year delay in resolving the case, some of the applicants feel that they are still physically fit to take on the jobs.

According to 48-year-old Handy Johnson, "I took that test wanting to have a job where I could give back to my community and establish a family tradition for my four sons, who would have been very proud of their dad. It was the job of a lifetime, but I was never given that chance." Johnson went on to say, "It was a huge slap in the face. Now, I feel a hundred pounds lighter. It feels like when you know you have all the odds stacked against you, but in the end God makes sure the righteous prevail." (Chicago Tribune, May 24)

The city of Chicago estimates that it will cost approximately $45 million to implement the ruling. Lawyers for the African-American applicants put the cost at $100 million. This cost will involve the hiring of 120 new firefighters and the payment of damages to 6,000 other applicants who were denied employment based on discriminatory policies.

This case has implications for the notion of disparate impact in relationship to pre-employment qualifications in both public and private sector employment. When there are tests and other so-called objective criteria for hiring, the ruling may provide applicants with legal grounds to make claims related to possible discriminatory impact.

"The court's decision last week in Arthur L. Lewis Jr. et al. vs. City of Chicago also makes it more difficult for employers to win summary judgment to dismiss such cases, observers say. While the decision may have a greater effect on public employers, it applies to private employers as well, attorneys say."

"The court's ruling focused on the statute of limitations to file claims in dispa-

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TULSA 1921

Quest for justice, reparations continues

By Dolores Cox

The matter of reparations for African Americans is one that the U.S. government has forever refused to address. Yet the condition of second-class status of persons of color, particularly Black people, is a matter of record in this country, ruled and dominated by white supremacy.

May 31 marked the anniversary of the 1921 Tulsa, Okla., race "riot." The so-called riot was actually an 18-hour massacre of approximately 300 Black people, perpetrated by white residents in the segregated section of Greenwood. It was accompanied by the displacement and ethnic cleansing of 10,000 Black residents who were driven out of town.

The Black section was known as "Black Wall Street" because it was a prosperous, self-sufficient example of active self-determination. The community owned its own homes, property, banks, library, art house, stores, movie theatres, schools, hospital and transportation. They built these institutions during the 57 years after emancipation from slavery. Oklahoma was then an oil-rich state, which helped make possible the harnessing of Black entrepreneurial spirit.

Ironically, African Americans migrated from the Deep South to Oklahoma and other states to escape white racist terrorism, to seek safe haven and a better life.

The May 31 pogrom-like attack, considered the worse race "riot" in U.S. history, involved white deputized mobs, the Ku Klux Klan and government officials. It was triggered by the commonplace "justification" and accusation that a white woman's "virtue" had been violated.

The incident involved a Black teenage "shoeshine boy" in an elevator in a busy building who stumbled and lost his balance. In the attempt to regain his footing he inadvertently touched the white female elevator operator. This occurred at a time when even looking at a white woman could cost a Black male his life.

The boy was accused of sexual assault and taken to the courthouse jail, where a white mob later gathered to lynch him. In the Jim Crow South, the lynching of Black people was a form of "justice" practiced frequently. Both white adults and children attended lynchings, and the victim's body parts were mutilated and then distributed as souvenirs. When the Greenwood Black men, including World War I vets, went to town to rescue the "shoeshine boy" they were shot at and killed, some while wearing their army uniforms.

The violence didn't end there. In the middle of the night while Blacks slept, their homes and stores were broken into and looted. The homes were also bombed by airplane and burned to the ground by lit torches. Black people were killed by machine guns in their homes and while fleeing in the streets, outnumbered 10-to -1 by the white population and unable to defend themselves or their property.

Black survivors were rounded up by the National Guard, detained for several days in the Convention Hall, and treated like criminals. When released, they were forced out of town and left destitute. Their land and property that had not been destroyed were stolen by white residents.

What Black Greenwood residents lost was not only their homes, land, businesses and personal possessions. Future generations of their descendents were denied, by deliberate acts of predatory bigotry and violence, the inheritance of what their families had built. Losses by Blacks in Tulsa reflect losses by all descendents of enslaved Africans, whose unpaid labor amounts today to trillions of dollars. This amassed fortune has accounted for the majority-white capitalists' wealth, from which Black descendants still have not benefited or received reparations. This situation has existed for centuries, since the founding of the U.S., based also on the theft of Indigenous lands and later of two-thirds of Mexico, in addition to slavery.

The legacy of white supremacy has helped create the disproportionate racial gaps in wealth, health, education and employment; incalculable intergenerational losses and damages; and continuing discrimination and marginalization of Blacks. Following emancipation, African Americans were at the bottom of the social, political and economic ladder, and have been intentionally kept there by institutional and systemic racism.

Displacement of the Tulsa survivors was the country's largest such diaspora until Hurricane Katrina in 2005, when an estimated 1 million mostly Black citizens lost their homes and property due to broken levees, and were forced to resettle throughout the country. Similar to Tulsa, New Orleans residents were "contained" in the New Orleans Superdome in deplorable conditions, largely ignored by the government and criminalized by the media. And having lost their homes, property, jobs and small businesses, they are still fighting for the right to return home.

Blacks also continue to be slaughtered in their own homes, exemplified by the May 16 terrorism by the Detroit police shooting, fire bombing and killing of 7-year-old Aiyana Jones while she slept. May 13 was also the 25th anniversary of the racist police helicopter bombing of the MOVE family house in Philadelphia and the shootings by government authorities that resulted in the deaths of 11 inhabitants, including children, and the destruction by fire of 61 adjacent homes.

To date, there are only 45 Tulsa "riot" survivors remaining, ranging in age from their 90s to 107 years old. For years, they have been seeking recognition of their humanity, justice and remuneration for damages owed them. But their efforts have been thwarted or ignored with no apologies given by the U.S. authorities.

For decades what happened in Greenwood was denied, whited out and covered up. It was deliberately kept out of U.S. history and remained Tulsa's best kept secret. Federal, state and local officials, and townspeople refused to acknowledge the atrocious event, and no individuals or agencies were ever held accountable.

After uncovering concealed evidence in 2001 on the "riot," a lawsuit was filed by professor/attorney Charles Ogletree for justice and reparations. A legal campaign called "One Day in May" was established to right the long overdue wrongs done to the remaining survivors while they are still alive. The urgency is obvious. □

Walk supports hurricane survivors

Harlem's 125th Street was the site of a "Post-Katrina/Rita Awareness Walk" on May 29. The purpose of the walk, attended by more than 60 people, was to protest that the issues arising after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in 2005 have not been resolved. Those issues include that more than a million people from the Gulf area — many of them Black — still remain displaced, the census will undercount the population, and the BP oil spill threatens the region. The walk also expressed support for immigrants who are being hounded and displaced.

High school students Rayelle Parker, a Katrina survivor now living in New York City, and Dalia Griñan coordinated the event, with the assistance of long-time community/political organizer Johnnie Stevens. Before the walk stepped off, a program at St. Mary's Episcopal Church featured speakers from supporting organizations. These included the Association of Black Social Workers, Nation of Islam, Picture the Homeless, Bail Out the People Movement, Coalition to Save Harlem, Vietnam Agent Orange Relief and Responsibility Campaign, Honduran Resistance, May 1 Coalition for Worker and Immigrant Rights, and others. The ballet class of Public School 126X delighted the audience with a dance performance.

The N.Y. Solidarity Coalition with Katrina and Rita Survivors announced a local fifth anniversary event on Aug. 29. For more information, go to postkatrinaritaawareness.webs.com.

— Report & photo by Ellen Catalinotto

Demanding summer jobs for youth

Campaign exposes theft of city funds

By Gavrielle Gemma
New York

What you don't know can kill you. Claiming a budget deficit, New York City Mayor Bloomberg, a multibillionaire, is waging war against city workers and every human service we need and deserve. There really is plenty of dough. The problem is that the NYC government acts as a collection agency for taxpayer dollars and hands it over to Wall Street and real estate developers.

City officials have created many ways to steal the public treasury. While the theft of our funds is outrageous, big business media never report on it, so workers are kept in the dark.

The Bail Out the People Movement is spearheading a national demand for a public jobs program. Its Jobs for All Campaign is taking on this fight in NYC where close to 1 million people are unemployed or underemployed. On June 3 it will be "attending" a hearing of the NYC Economic Development Corporation.

What is the EDC and why should I care?

The EDC has a master contract with NYC that is renewed every year. In this contract the city allows the EDC to collect all revenues generated by the rental of city-owned properties and the sale of city-owned land. That revenue is close to $1 billion a year. The EDC must turn over only about 8 percent of that to the city itself.

The EDC then takes that money and hands it over to real estate developers and private corporations for projects they want. They give outright grants of money; sell land worth millions for peanuts; arrange low-interest loans or interest deferred loans; and raise bonds for these developments with low utility rates and tax abatements. With a staff of 400 people, the EDC maneuvers 24/7 to gentrify and destroy our communities in every corner of the city. The interest paid to banks on the bonds they arrange are triple tax-exempt from federal, state and city taxes.

The EDC's hand is behind every development project benefiting real estate empires and banks from Harlem to Chinatown. They boast of 100 projects they are working on right now.

The EDC is made up of a board of 27 people from Wall Street, real estate companies and the law firms that represent them. It is appointed by Bloomberg.

EDC even steals the 8 percent

What gives the mayor the right to sign a master contract with these thieves that take our funds and allow these profit-swollen bandits to not pay taxes? Nothing.

As if this is not bad enough, it gets worse. NYC City Comptroller John Liu, who is elected, has just charged the EDC with failing to turn over $125 million to the city budget under the master contract.

The NYC Jobs for All Campaign is demanding this money be turned over immediately to create 66,000 summer jobs for youth. The summer youth jobs program has been cut down to 17,000 jobs from last year's 56,000. Even this is pathetic. A secret lottery determines who gets the jobs. Last year over 150,000 high school-age youth applied. That is only a fraction of NYC youth who have been locked out of jobs.

In African-American and Latino/a communities youth unemployment is as high as 70 percent, which amounts to economic racist genocide. The campaign says, "Jobs and education, not jails and war."

The campaign is also demanding the cancellation of the master contract, which the city can do with 90 days' notice to the EDC. All the properties and funds held by this shadow government of bankers and real estate developers should be returned to the workers of NYC for the good of our communities. These funds and properties belong to us. The June 3 protest will begin a fight that says: "No jobs, no business as usual." To join this fight, contact the Jobs for All Campaign at 212-633-6646.

The writer is an organizer with the NYC Jobs for All Campaign.

Letter to the editor:

Defeat Christie's cuts

New Jersey's reactionary Republican governor, Chris Christie, a former federal prosecutor described by right-wing columnist George Will as "America's most interesting governor," is trying to destroy public education, public services and public-sector unions. While demanding that teachers take a one-year pay freeze and that teachers and local government workers pay more for health care, Christie refuses to reinstate the "millionaire's tax," a one-time tax surcharge in former Gov. Corzine's budget last year for people earning more than $400,000 per year. Christie says he refuses to raise taxes, but his empty rhetoric only applies to the rich.

Christie has even picked a needless battle, insulting the African-American community by refusing to reappoint Justice John Wallace, the only African American sitting on the New Jersey Supreme Court.

He has made drastic cuts in municipal aid across the state and now insists that state government at all levels adopt a 2.5 percent annual spending cap, dubbed "Cap 2.5." He has warned that municipalities that don't comply will face financial ruin. Since health care costs increase more than 2.5 percent each year, the implications of Cap 2.5 are not only that school teachers and public workers will never get pay raises, but even that they will receive pay cuts and layoffs. His budget includes cuts to school breakfast and lunch programs for poor children, elimination of funds for summer camp for blind children, and the meals on wheels program for seniors who cannot feed themselves.

Christie has also proposed a "toolkit" with 33 proposals, all of which hurt working people. He has proposed allowing government at all levels to "opt out" of Civil Service, which would lead to the cronyism, corruption and discrimination in government service that existed before 1947. There is also a proposal to disallow appeals of suspensions lasting less than 30 days, rather than the five days currently allowed.

While Christie may succeed in some of his goals, these are the ones that most urgently need to be defeated.

On May 22 some 30,000 to 40,000 people, even by police estimates, demonstrated against Christie's cuts. The previous record for a protest in New Jersey's capital was 20,000.

Organizers of the protest knew they weren't going to reach Christie, but hoped to install a spine into some of the Democratic legislators who have been rolling over and playing dead. Public school teachers and public workers have sent messages to the Democrats that if they don't stand up to Christie they will have to consider independent alternatives to the Democrats.

Christie has made drastic cuts in funding for school districts, leading to layoffs of teachers. When he went to visit Montclair High School, he was greeted by students who picketed him; one sign read: "Hey Christie, I'd quote Shakespeare, but my teacher was laid off." When thousands of students walked out all over the state in late April to protest the cuts to school districts, Christie referred to them as "drug mules for teachers." He has also called for cuts in aid for higher education. In response, college students have formed the Take Back Trenton Coalition (La Coalición para Recuperar Trenton y el Estado para el Pueblo), which includes not only college students, but also unions — SEIU, CWA, AFSCME, AFT and others.

The May 22nd demonstration was sponsored by the New Jersey Education Association, CWA, AFSCME, AFT, NJ AFL-CIO, People's Organization for Progress, Take Back Trenton Coalition and over 60 community organizations.

There is no mandate in NJ for Christie to make all of the changes he is proposing. Christie narrowly won because nobody liked Corzine.

The struggle has just begun.

Dave Schraeger (CWA Local 1038)

'Raise wages now!'

A Living Wage Rally was called by the Retail, Wholesale, Department Store union on the steps of City Hall in New York City on May 25. The multinational rally brought together mostly low-wage workers — organized and unorganized — with support from union representatives as well as from religious and community groups. One of the main demands of the organizers was "Say no way to poverty pay." Part of the May 25 rally leaflet reads: "Tell City Hall that when our public dollars subsidize private development, we deserve something in return: good jobs, good wages, good benefits."

— Report & photo by Anne Pruden

On the Picket Line

by Sue Davis

Applesauce workers strike

Refusing to accept a $1.50 hourly pay cut, the 300 workers who make applesauce at the Mott plant east of Rochester, N.Y., launched an unfair labor practices strike on May 23. The workers, represented by Local 220 of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store union (part of the Food and Commercial Workers union), rejected a concessions-riddled contract by the Dr. Pepper Snapple Group (DPS), which last year raked in $550 million in profits out of $1 billion in revenue. DPS's head banked $6.5 million. RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum noted, "This is about a large company doing extraordinarily well, demonstrating outrageously greedy behavior. It's beyond outrageous." (AFL-CIO blog, May 25 & 28)

Shaw's workers demand contract

Over 300 workers at Shaw's Distribution Center in Methuen, Mass., who have been on strike since March 7, conducted a five-day, 60-mile march for justice in late May. Wearing bright yellow Food and Commercial Workers T-shirts, Local 791 workers were supported by many members of other unions and public officials who gathered at the Massachusetts State House in Boston to cheer on their struggle for a just and decent contract. (UFCW blogspot, May 28)

Miners protest, denounce nonunion Massey

Protesting the April 5 mining disaster that took the lives of 29 workers, more than 600 members of the Mine Workers and other unions converged in the teeming rain on May 17 at the corporate offices of Massey Energy Co. in Richmond, Va., to denounce its criminal record of safety violations. In the last 10 years 52 miners have died due to unsafe conditions in Massey mines. During the shareholders' meeting the next day about 800 UMWA members and community allies rallied to demand the arrest of top Massey bosses, including CEO Don Blankenship (a major Tea Party supporter), who last year received $17 million in "compensation." (www.defendersfje.org, May 17 & 18)

The May 24 Charlotte Daily Mail reported that UMWA members and family members of those who died, speaking at a congressional hearing investigating the disaster, said workers "at the Upper Big Branch Mine did not feel free to speak up about safety concerns as they would have at a union operation." One worker testified, "As a union miner, I was able to refuse to work under unsafe conditions." Recognizing Massey's aggressively anti-union history, the head of the hearing assured witnesses that because they were "part of a congressional inquiry, retaliation against them would be considered a serious offence."

New election rules for air, rail workers

The National Mediation Board ruled May 10 that air and rail workers were entitled to the same voting rules as other workers wishing to join unions. It finally overturned the viciously anti-union Rail Labor Act, which stipulated that every worker who did not cast a ballot in a representation election was automatically counted as a "no" vote. Now elections will be determined by the majority of votes cast. This will have immediate repercussions for more than 7,000 flight attendants at Northwest who lost union representation when Northwest merged with Delta last year. They plan to file for an election 30 days after the rule becomes effective. (AFL-CIO blog, May 10)

Unions demand 'Boycott Arizona'

Many groups in all walks of life, including the AFL-CIO, the Service Employees union and the Food and Commercial Workers union, have jumped on the "Boycott Arizona" bandwagon to protest passage of racist profiling bill SB 1070. The Boston School Bus Drivers, Steelworkers

Continued on page 5

As BP's latest 'fix' fails

Capitalists try to deflect blame for oil spill

By Gene Clancy

Bobby Jindal, the Republican governor of Louisiana, is angry. Very angry. So is Bill Nelson, a Democrat from Florida. And on May 29, on learning that BP's sixth and latest attempt to stem the gushing oil in the Gulf of Mexico had failed, President Barack Obama said, "I am enraged and heartbroken."

The capitalist politicians are beginning to realize that as BP's credibility declines, their own dubious records are increasingly called into question. They know that the broad masses of people are stirring in response to the crisis, so their anger and dismay are tinged with political fear and mindless panic.

Even Sarah Palin, the former vice presidential candidate of "Drill, baby, drill!" fame, has joined in and accused the Obama administration of failing to adequately enforce the environmental laws on the books.

Jindal is threatening to go ahead with construction of a large sand berm, even though the Army Corps of Engineers says it may do more harm than good and could leave the Louisiana coast even more vulnerable to hurricanes than it already is. Jindal has conveniently forgotten that before the current crisis, he was a strong advocate of drilling in the Gulf and accepted large donations from Big Oil during his gubernatorial campaign.

Of course, even the leading establishment politicians may be moved by the catastrophe in the Gulf. Dead sharks and dolphins are washing ashore. Crabs, turtles and birds are soaked in oil as the slick sloshes into Louisiana's wetlands. South of New Orleans, chocolatelike globs of oil have shut down the public beach.

Not to mention that the extensive fishing and tourism industries along the Gulf Coast are threatened with virtual extinction.

Coast Guard officials say the spill's impact now stretches 150 miles. Scientists fear the spreading plumes will catch the ocean current to the Florida Keys.

Now that BP's balleyhooed "Top Kill" effort to cap the undersea gusher has failed, the enormity of what has happened and continues to happen in the Gulf is slowly sinking in, like the foul mess that is despoiling the entire region. BP has estimated that the relief well it is now drilling, which is supposed to be a "permanent fix" to the disaster, will not be completed until mid-August. Hurricane season begins on June 1, and forecasters expect it to be one of the most turbulent seasons ever.

How to blame the victim

The most outrageous of the apologists for BP must surely be Charles Krauthammer, a syndicated neo-conservative columnist. Recognizing the foolishness of drilling in 5,000 feet of water, Krauthammer blames not BP, not the incestuous relationship of governmental regulatory agencies with the oil companies, not even bad luck.

No, according to this die-hard defender of capitalism, "Environmental chic has driven us out there." He claims that "we go deep (5,000 feet and more), in part because environmentalists have succeeded in rendering the Pacific and nearly all of the Atlantic coast off-limits to oil production. ... And of course, in the safest of all places, on land, we've had a 30-year ban on drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge." (www.townhall.com, May 28)

Krauthammer's use of the pronouns "we" and "us" in his diatribe leaves no question about who or what he is really for. He suggests that rather than in the Gulf, "we" should be drilling "where there are practically no people."

No people, such as the Inuits in Alaska, or the crab fishermen in the Chesapeake Bay, or those in the teeming beaches of Los Angeles? He ends his column with the admonition that, in any case, people must simply accept the current situation, since "No one has the assets and expertise of BP. The federal government can fight wars, conduct a census and hand out billions in earmarks, but it has not a clue how to cap a one-mile deep, out of control oil well."

Of course, neither does BP.

But Krauthammer sticks to his blind faith in the capitalist system: "What possible interest can [BP] have to do anything but cap the well as quickly as possible? Every day that oil is spilled means millions more in losses, cleanup and restitution."

In other words, the horror and immorality of this manmade disaster is reduced to a simple financial calculation. The search for profits will solve all problems, notwithstanding the fact that it is this same search for profits that has caused most of them.

Hydrofracking: another disaster waiting to happen

The lies of right-wing apologists for the big energy companies are refuted by an environmental development in western Pennsylvania and upstate New York. There, a debate is raging about whether to commence drilling for natural gas in the relatively pristine Finger Lakes region, known for its fertile agriculture, wineries and beautiful landscape.

Geologists estimate that up to 51.6 trillion cubic feet of natural gas lie trapped in the Marcellus shale, a massive underground black shale formation that stretches from Pennsylvania to the Finger Lakes. The natural gas industry wants to use a controversial technique called hydraulic fracturing or "hydrofracking" to obtain it.

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation recently issued an impact statement, and the natural gas companies and some local landowners want the technique approved quickly. Despite protestations to the contrary, the governor and much of the state legislature see the drilling, and the money derived from taxes, as a godsend that could solve their current budget crisis.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, environmental advocates, several Finger Lakes winery operators and Native American leaders say the proposed regulations are inadequate. Their approval would likely mean polluted air and water, destroyed landscapes and health hazards.

Hydrofracking involves forcing chemically treated water at tremendous pressure into a well that is drilled into the layered rock, first vertically, then horizontally. The water fractures the shale, releasing the natural gas. Millions of gallons of water and chemicals are needed because of the low permeability of the Marcellus shale. This water becomes permanently contaminated and must be disposed of.

The process has already been started in western Pennsylvania. Although it has produced a lot of economic activity, including tax receipts and of course profits, there have already been problems. Last year Cabot Oil and Gas Corp. had to halt production after three spills in Susquehanna County within one month, polluting a creek and a wetland. The company has also been cited for allowing methane gas to migrate into drinking water wells, putting them at risk of exploding.

Pennsylvania is already running out of places to store the millions of gallons of polluted water. The Chesapeake Energy Corp. was forced by public opposition to withdraw a proposal to store wastewater in an abandoned mine near Keuka Lake, one of New York's Finger Lakes. This is the kind of planning and "expertise," based on maximizing profit, that is displayed by big energy companies like BP.

The Haudenosaunee Confederacy of Native Americans opposes the drilling anywhere in New York, which contains their traditional homelands. "Even when things are done right, the impacts are devastating," the Haudenosaunee said in a statement to the New York State DEC. "We have seen [the destruction of the environment] ... and most heartbreakingly the permanent disruption of people's homes, lives and communities." (www.hetf.org)

Production for profit means the continued rape of the environment and the exploitation of the people, who are part of that environment. Ending capitalism and replacing it with socialism becomes more urgent with each new disaster. □

On the Picket Line

Continued from page 4

Local 8751 was one of the first. It passed a unanimous resolution on April 29 that vowed, in the spirit of César Chávez, the late president of the Farm Workers union, to boycott the apartheid state of Arizona. Furthermore, it resolved: "That USW Local 8751 categorically rejects racist profiling and scapegoating of workers and that we, as workers, refuse to be divided to serve the corporate agenda of layoffs, givebacks and union-busting."

The San Francisco Labor Council passed a resolution on May 24, noting that Arizona laws promoting racial profiling and banning the teaching of ethnic studies are measures reminiscent of South African apartheid and Nazi Germany. It noted that similar racist laws are being considered in at least 10 states and that labor and community groups must act decisively "before its contagion spreads." The resolution supported the nationwide boycott of Arizona and the May 29 national march in Phoenix as well as the demonstration at the Arizona Diamondbacks' game in San Francisco on the same day.

Catfish workers take defiant stand

On May 26, the approximately 600 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1529 voted to strike rather than accept a horrendous contract.

The Delta Pride Catfish workers have battled for more than a year and a half for an acceptable contract. The one offered by the company included a seven-day work week; eliminates overtime; ends severance pay should the plant close; and allows for job outsourcing while tripling employee contributions to health care benefits, among other things. And the employees haven't even had a raise since 2006. The Delta Pride workers are mostly Black women in very poor Indianola, Miss. Ninety-nine percent of the union vote was in favor of a strike.

In 1990 the same plant was embroiled in a successful three-month struggle which drew national attention and is still considered a landmark strike for Southern and Black labor. Twenty years later, the workers are not going to allow the gains from 1990 to evaporate without a fight. If a reasonable contract isn't offered, this could be another tremendously important strike.

— Sean Schafron

Affirmative action

Continued from page 3

rate impact discrimination cases. Disparate impact is an employment policy or practice that, while neutral on its face, adversely affects a particular protected group." (Business Insurance, May 31)

Without rebellions, there is no progress

The passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were the result of protracted struggles in the U.S. southern, western and northern regions. Yet with passage of this legislation, it took the advent of urban rebellions and other political activity to get any real movement in regard to the implementation of affirmative action programs.

In Detroit the implementation of programs designed to hire large numbers of African Americans, women, people with disabilities, lesbian/gay/bi/trans/queer people and other oppressed groups only took place after a 1967 rebellion and radical mass struggles in the schools, universities, against private companies and within the municipal governments. After the election of the city's first African-American mayor, Coleman A. Young, in 1973, his administration embarked upon a broad affirmative action program that brought thousands of people from historically disadvantaged groups into city government, including police and firefighters.

The frontal assault on affirmative action gained a tremendous boost with the Bakke decision of 1978, which legally struck down numerical goals in the implementation of admission policies at higher educational institutions. Other challenges took place during the 1980s that impacted the implementation of affirmative action programs.

A Supreme Court decision in June 1989 granted permission to white firefighters in Birmingham, Ala., to challenge an eight-year-old ruling which required the hiring and promotion of African Americans within the city's department.

Essentially this decision removed the ability of consent decrees related to such cases to be applied as a means of resolving racial discrimination charges. With the new rulings in effect, white employers or employees had the legal right to challenge the constitutionality of affirmative action programs that favor the hiring and promotion of African Americans as a measure to correct past discriminatory employment practices.

Despite numerous civil rights acts and court rulings in favor of civil rights and affirmative action, African Americans and other marginalized groups still suffer discrimination and disparate treatment. It will no doubt take the rejuvenation of the anti-racist and nondiscrimination movements to push the struggle forward to achieve full equality and self-determination for all oppressed people.

Read entire article at workers.org.

Protests across the U.S. show

Arizona's racist law is attack on all

Special to Workers World

Protests in support of immigrants and against Arizona's racist anti-immigrant legislation were held across the U.S. in solidarity with a national march and rally in Phoenix May 29 of 200,000 people. In many cities demonstrators also targeted similar legislation being pushed in their states as well as Obama's failure to pass promised progressive national legislation for immigrant rights.

On May 29 protesters in **New York** held a street rally in East Harlem's El Barrio, a center of the Latino/a immigrant community, to say down with the racist law in Arizona. They added their voices to the thousands marching in Arizona against the law.

The demonstrators began the day with a walk to bring attention to the plight of the survivors of the Katrina-Rita Hurricanes. They marched from Marcus Garvey Park to the rally at the corner of 116th th St. and Lexington Ave. Members of the community greeted them warmly. One Latina visiting from Florida took a sign proclaiming "¡Boicot Arizona! ¡Legalizacion immediatamente!" Waving the sign she shouted in support of immigrants and against the Arizona law.

Larry Holmes, a leader of the Bail Out the People Movement, which organized the rally, told the crowd: "No worker is illegal. Racism is illegal. Poverty should be illegal. Homelessness should be illegal. Joblessness should be illegal."

Lucy Pagoada, a high school teacher and Honduran activist, declared that the problem of Arizona is the problem of everyone. "If we don't act then it will happen in New York," she said. "It is an attack against all of us. Let us say no to the racist law of Arizona but yes to the people of Arizona."

BOPM organizer Gavrielle Gemma said she was unemployed because of corporate America and Wall Street, not because of immigrants. "We need to get together — African American, Latino, white, Asian, U.S. born, immigrant and undocumented — in a powerful struggle to demand the right to have a job."

A rally for immigrant rights and against Arizona legislation targeting undocumented workers drew more than 100 people in a noontime gathering outside the Constitution Center on May 26 in **Philadelphia**. After hearing speakers and some entertainers, the demonstrators marched to the Federal Building.

Peruvian immigrant Carmen Marcet reminded people that it was large-scale protests that stopped a 2006 congressional bill that targeted undocumented immigrants and that a similar fight is needed now.

Pennsylvania is one of 17 states where legislators have proposed laws similar to Arizona's Senate Bill 1070. The rally included labor, religious and community activists, and several people from the Philadelphia area who were heading to Arizona to take part in upcoming protests.

On May 29 in **San Francisco** several hundred immigrant families and immigrant rights activists marched along the scenic Embarcadero to AT&T Park, home of the S.F. Giants baseball team. They picketed outside the main entrance until the game between the Arizona Diamondbacks and Giants started, protesting Arizona's racist immigration policy and anti-Latino/a racial profiling by police.

Some demonstrators proudly wore their S.F. Giants shirts as they appealed to the hundreds of baseball fans pouring into the baseball stadium to take a stand against Arizona-style racism. Many wore new "Do I look illegal?" T-shirts while chanting: "Todos somos Arizona; legalizacion para todos" and "We didn't cross the border, the border crossed us!" Others carried signs, many homemade, reading: "Repeal SB1070 in AZ, Unconditional amnesty in all 50!" and "1960 Alabama, 2010 Arizona." This action was organized by the SF May Day 2010 coalition.

Honduran activist, Lucy Pagoada
EAST HARLEM, NY
WW PHOTO: BRENDA RYAN

PHILADELPHIA
WW PHOTO: JOE PIETTE

More than 100 people heard Antonio Bustamante, chair of the Arizona Hispanic Bar Association's Civil Rights Task Force, speak May 29 at historic St. Anne's Church in **Detroit's** Latino/a community. Bustamante delivered a rousing account of the struggle against SB 1070 and called for the boycott of Arizona.

Young organizers from One Michigan urged actions including a protest at the Lansing, Mich., State Capitol on June 2; an immigrant rights march at the Kalamazoo High School commencement address by President Barack Obama tentatively set for June 10; and a rally prior to U.S. Civil Rights Commission hearing Michigan's copycat SB 1070 proposal at 9 a.m., June 18 at the Wayne State University Law School in Detroit, followed by a 5:30 p.m. mass demonstration at the Arizona Diamondbacks baseball game at Detroit's Comerica Park initiated by the Michigan Emergency Committee Against War and Injustice.

Uniting in solidarity with the struggle against Arizona's SB 1070, people from Dallas, Houston, Corpus Christi, San Antonio and Hondo gathered at the Texas capitol in **Austin** to say "No!" to racism in Arizona and Texas. The rally began with an Indigenous blessing and dances. Speaker after speaker vowed to organize against Texas State Representative Debbie Riddle, who plans to introduce an Arizona-type bill in Texas when the legislature convenes in January 2011.

Organized by the Austin Immigrant Rights Coalition, the rally also had a message for President Obama: "Obama, you went back on your promise to promote family values," said Michael Chavez of Houston. "Deporting and separating family members should not be an American value."

Chavel Lopez from the Southwest Workers Union in San Antonio called the Arizona law racist and said, "Organize and fight this legislation!" The SWU took a bus with over 50 people to Phoenix for the national action. A speaker from the International Action Center said that all workers must stand up with immigrants and work together to defeat SB 1070 and the proposed Texas legislation. "This is not a problem for those with brown skin, but an attack on all workers because an injury to one is an injury to all. In unity we can defeat the racists!"

Joan Marquardt, Betsey Piette, Gloria Rubac, Brenda Ryan and Mike Shane contributed to this article.

Protesters say no apartheid law in Texas

HOUSTON

Chants of "G.O.P. you should know, hate in Texas has to go!" greeted members of the Republican National Hispanic Assembly of Harris County in Houston as they arrived at their monthly meeting on May 26. Texas State Rep. Debbie Riddle was their special guest. Riddle is planning to introduce an anti-immigrant, Arizona-type bill in the Texas Legislature in January.

A demonstration, called by Houston's Coalition in Defense of the Community, made their demands loud and clear: "We will not tolerate laws like Arizona's in Texas. The Arizona law is racist, it promotes racial profiling, and what we need is comprehensive immigration reform in this country, not jailings, deportations and family separations."

Almost 75 people turned out on one-day's notice with colorful signs and noise-makers — everyone from grandparents to infants from Guatemala, Mexico, Venezuela, El Salvador along with supporters from the U.S. Many janitors who are members of the Service Employees union joined with students and other workers to disrupt the Hispanic Republican meeting and put them on notice that the people of Houston will not tolerate apartheid in Texas. Three local television stations covered the protest.

— Report & photo by Gloria Rubac

Workers opening fight against bosses' austerity offensive

By John Catalinotto

Inspired by the courageous example workers are setting in Greece, workers throughout Europe are beginning to respond with strikes and street demonstrations to the capitalist offensive that is minimizing their wages, eliminating vital social benefits and contracting the job market.

In a period of a few weeks, workers in Portugal, France, Italy, Spain and Romania have been or will be in the streets and on strike protesting austerity programs. The ruling-class governments disguise these programs as so-called common sacrifice to reduce government debt and prevent collapse. In reality, the programs squeeze workers while subsidizing banks and businesses.

The Greek workers' exemplary actions — nine major work actions since February and another planned for June — stem from the refusal of the PAME union confederation leadership to hold workers responsible for solving the capitalist crisis. In other countries, where union heads talk about defending the solvency of "their" country, they can only wind up sacrificing workers' wages and benefits and weakening their unions' ability to fight.

The Communist Party of Greece also raised the banner of a united European workers' struggle to confront the capitalist offensive. Hanging from the ruins of Athens' Parthenon the banner read, "Peoples of Europe, rise up." Nothing would be better to confront the financial giants based in the most powerful imperialist countries in Europe — Germany, France, Britain especially, as well as the U.S. — who have whipped all European governments into line to impose drastic cuts on the workers.

The capitalists are first targeting the workers in the economically weaker countries — Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland and Italy. These are also countries — along with more affluent France — where bosses fear the militancy of the working class and want to crush the workers' movements lest that militancy spread. There is no doubt, however, that austerity programs are also planned to squeeze workers in Germany, France, Britain and the rest of northern Europe.

300,000 in Lisbon

During the last week in May the major workers' demonstration was in Portugal, which like Greece is one of the poorer countries still integrated in the imperialist world. Of Portugal's 10 million people, 300,000 workers — as estimated by the action's organizers in the CGTP union central — marched down Lisbon's big boulevards to reject the regime's austerity. All observers agree it was the largest workers' protest since the 1974 revolution ousted a fascist regime, already weakened by the liberation struggles in Portugal's African colonies, which then won independence.

A member of the CGTP national leadership committee told Reuters May 29 that the demonstration was only the first step in protesting an austerity plan that includes tax increases and a freeze on civil servants' pay. "It's a stage of a continuous struggle that will intensify," said Armenio Carlos. "We're leaving all options open, including calling a national general strike."

In France a few days earlier tens of thousands of workers marched in the pouring rain to defend the retirement age, which the government wants to raise eventually to age 70, and pensions, which the regime wants to cut.

Italy's CGIL union confederation, 6-million strong, announced a nationwide one-day strike on June 25, with protest rallies around the country two weeks earlier to build up to that action. The Italian government plans to reduce civil service jobs, cut salaries, raise retirement age and cut the health care system in an attempt to cut the budget by 24 billion euros (As of May, 1 euro equals about $1.25).

Unions in Spain, where unemployment hovers at 20 percent, still haven't announced a national general strike, although there have been strong strikes in the Basque country over the past few months. The government announced a program to cut 80 billion euros from the budget by cutting 13,000 public service jobs, reducing salaries of state workers by 5 percent and freezing pensions.

France and Italy have center-right regimes in office. Greece, Portugal and Spain have center-left regimes led by nominally socialist or social-democratic parties. These Western European "left" parties may have presided over workers' gains in the past, but now they hardly distinguish themselves from the rightists, much like the Democratic Party in the U.S. In most cases the rightists and the others have joined in parliaments to impose austerity plans on the workers.

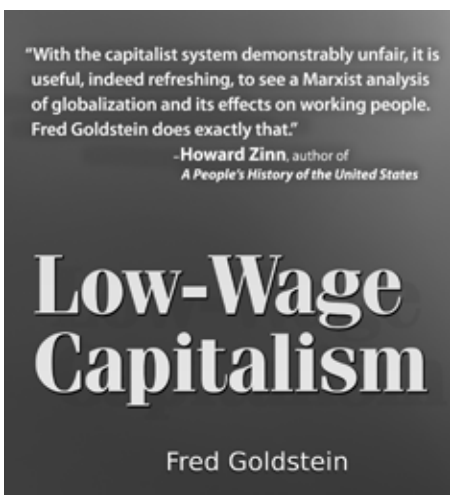
Romania is one of the first of the Eastern European countries, victims of the 1989 counterrevolutionary wave that turned them into virtual colonies of Western capital, where workers are holding general strikes against austerity cuts. There, the current salaries are already quite austere by West European standards.

On May 17 there was a massive protest in Bucharest, Romania's capital, where retired workers nearly stormed parliament. On May 31 tens of thousands of public sector workers walked off the job protesting cuts imposed by the International Monetary Fund in return for a 20 billion euro loan. The IMF ordered Romania to slash public-sector wages by a quarter and cut pensions by 15 percent and wants it to cut government spending on goods and services by a fifth. Teachers, government workers, customs officers, pensioners and medical staff all joined the strike.

Email: jcat@workers.org

PHOTO: JORGE FIGEIREDO

On May 29, 300,000 workers marched in Lisbon. In English the banner says: "Rights won are not to be stolen; we urgently need different policies."



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200,000 march against Arizona racism

PHOTO: REBECCA FONTAINE

Continued from page 1

tion and for the Democratic Party to meet their demands.

But just how many Novembers can the people wait before real change is made?

The thousands marching in the hot Arizona sun, like those who marched in the tens of thousands in D.C. on March 21, are demanding no less than legalization for the undocumented and an end to the war on immigrants. Nothing less is acceptable.

The passage of SB 1070 and its tag-along bills, like the one attacking ethnic studies, have not only provoked the outrage of the oppressed communities, but they have also changed the attitude of many activists and leaders in these communities. Many have lost their patience with those they elected and know that immigration reform from the U.S. Congress will not benefit the undocumented and migrant communities. The workers and oppressed talked about the system of capitalism and how this is a fight between workers and capital.

As the state moves forward with its plans to repress the workers, to divide them during this time of capitalist economic crisis, workers and oppressed are waking up and seeing through the thin veneer of lies. This summer — with calls for a Freedom Summer Arizona by many people and organizations — provides the opportunity to continue building the unity, solidarity and understanding of the class struggle needed to successfully fight back and defeat racist attacks like SB 1070.

The writer is an organizer with the Tucson May 1 Coalition.

More U.S. interference planned

New covert action initiative in Africa

By Abayomi Azikiwe
Editor, Pan-African News Wire

Recent international press reports indicate that the U.S. military has started a renewed covert action plan to send special operations commandos into areas of the Horn of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The objective of this policy is in part to carry out targeted assassinations against people considered U.S. enemies.

The secret directive was issued and signed in September 2009 by Gen. David H. Petraeus, head of the U.S. Military Central Command. The seven-page document has been described as both the Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force Executive Order and the Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force Execute Order.

Even though the reports claim that the Task Force will go after al-Qaeda and its affiliates, the order targets areas in the Horn of Africa where resistance forces are operating against U.S.-backed regimes in Somalia, Ethiopia and Djibouti. In Somalia the fragile Transitional Federal Government has received substantial financial and military assistance from the U.S. administrations of both George W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Mark Mazzetti reported: "While the Bush administration had approved some clandestine military activities far from designated war zones, the new order is intended to make such efforts more systematic and long term, officials said. Its goals are to build networks that could 'penetrate, disrupt, defeat or destroy' Al Qaeda and other militant groups, as well as to 'prepare the environment' for future attacks by American or local military forces, the document said. The order, however, does not appear to authorize offensive strikes in any specific countries." (New York Times, May 24)

This recent revelation seems to designate to the Pentagon tasks which were previously carried out by the Central Intelligence Agency. The CIA has voiced no opposition to the Petraeus order, which continues the pattern of covert operations such as drone attacks and other forms of targeted assassinations.

According to the document quoted in the New York Times, "The order from Central Command is focused on gathering intelligence in the target countries 'by American troops, foreign businesspeople, academics or others, to pinpoint threats, identify militants and forge persistent situational awareness.'" (Associated Press, May 25)

This document confirms the increasingly aggressive military and intelligence operations on the part of the Obama administration. The United States Africa Command (AFRICOM) has received additional funding under Obama, while increased military maneuvers and joint operations have been carried out in West Africa and offshore in the Gulf of Guinea.

Main U.S. targets

U.S. foreign policy in Africa has targeted Somalia in order to prevent the resistance forces of Hizbul Islam and Al-Shabab from taking power from the U.S.-backed TFG. Also the neighboring Ethiopian government of Meles Zenawi has been closely allied with the U.S. and receives significant military assistance from Washington.

In Djibouti both France and the U.S. maintain military bases inside the country. Offshore in the Gulf of Aden, the U.S., the European Union and other states have flotillas of warships designed to prevent attacks on vessels flowing through one of the most lucrative shipping lanes in the world.

Other states targeted for U.S. covert operations include Sudan in central Africa where the government has come under pressure for its efforts to quell a rebel insurgency in the western region of Darfur. The International Criminal Court has issued warrants for the arrests of Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir and other leading government officials.

Even though the United States is not party to the ICC, the foreign policy of the Obama administration and the European Union is designed to bring about regime change in Sudan. An internationally supervised election in Sudan during April that resulted in the victory of the ruling National Congress Party and the southern-based Sudan People's Liberation Movement did not halt the efforts to undermine this African state.

In the southern African nation of Zimbabwe, the United States has continued its plans to topple President Robert Mugabe and the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front from the national unity government that has included the Western-backed Movement for Democratic Change political factions. Economic sanctions remain against Zimbabwe, and a recent diplomatic assault by U.S. Undersecretary for African Affairs Johnnie Carson resulted in a rebuke by the Zimbabwean Ambassador to the United States. (Zimbabwe Herald, May 26)

In Nigeria the Obama administration has placed nationals from the oil-producing West African state on a list that requires special scrutiny at airports for flights bound for the United States. In a recent statement, the U.S. made demands on how the electoral commission should be structured inside Nigeria, saying that preparations for national elections were not moving fast enough. (News Agency of Nigeria, May 31)

Such actions by the United States illustrate clearly that this imperialist state is stepping up its efforts to further control the internal affairs of various African states as well as influence and dominate developments in the Middle East and Central Asia as mandated by the Joint Unconventional Warfare Task Force.

Anti-imperialists must show solidarity

The adoption of this new covert action initiative on the part of the Pentagon must be opposed by anti-war and anti-imperialist groups inside the United States. These practices will ultimately lead to the deaths of many nationals from the targeted states and to stifling the right of oppressed and colonial peoples to self-determination.

Although in 2010 the focus of attention for U.S. imperialism is what they call "Islamic extremism or terrorism," the ultimate objective of this interference in the internal affairs of African states and other geopolitical regions is the same as it was during the 1960s through the 1980s — to ensure the political and economic dominance of world capitalism over the resources of the planet.

People inside the U.S. and other imperialist countries must demonstrate their principled solidarity by opposing these military operations. Anti-imperialists must also advance the right of all oppressed people to independence and sovereignty.

Email: panw@africamail.com. Read the entire article at www.workers.org.

Environmental activists expose Chevron's crimes

By Gloria Rubac

Emem Okon WW PHOTO: GLORIA RUBAC

Emem Okon traveled halfway around the world from Nigeria to Houston to attend the annual stockholders meeting of Chevron Oil Company on May 27. But she and 13 others were denied entry despite having legal proxy credentials.

Okon wanted to represent the voices and tell the stories of the women in the Niger Delta — women who have called, written letters and protested in Nigeria to no avail. They have organized to demand that Chevron clean up the environment, end gas flaring, and "respect their own human rights policies which call for two-way communication between Chevron and the Niger Delta communities." (Justice in Nigeria Now press release)

Not only were the delegates banned, but police arrested five of them who did civil disobedience after being refused entry. Among the five arrested was Antonia Juhasz, author of "The True Cost of Chevron: An Alternative Annual Report." Juhasz was dragged from the meeting as shareholders and their proxies chanted, "Chevron lies, people die." CEO John Watson abruptly ended the meeting.

Others arrested included Rev. Ken Davis of Community for a Better Environment from Richmond, Calif.; Juan Parras of Houston-based Texas Environmental Justice Advocacy Services; and Mitchell Anderson and Han Shan of Amazon Watch.

Before his arrest, Rev. Davis stated, "I represent an area where there is no beauty shop, groceries, or cleaners. Our industry is Chevron. My people breathe their contamination every day and are constantly sick. Our health is not for sale." (JNN press release)

Chevron's actions in Houston have contradicted its own so-called human rights policy by silencing the voices of people from Nigeria, Australia, Ecuador, Burma, Colombia, Canada and Richmond, Calif. Nigerian Omoyele Sowore explained, "Chevron continues its criminal behavior by denying its shareholders a voice, as it has denied impacted communities a voice about pollution and climate change and they continue their connivance and collusion with military dictators around the world to suppress the voices in the communities where it operates." (www.TrueCostofChevron.com) □

Imperialist has moment of truth in Afghanistan

By John Catalinotto

An imperialist politician was forced to resign May 31, not for a scandal, not even for getting caught lying to the public. This time German President Horst Köhler, a Christian Democrat (CDU), was forced to resign for giving everyone a moment of truth about Germany's role in the war in Afghanistan.

Speaking on Deutschlandradio on May 22 while visiting troops in Afghanistan, Köhler let it slip out: "But my estimation is that, on the whole, we are on the way to understanding, even broadly in society, that a country of our size, with this orientation toward foreign trade and therefore also dependence on foreign trade, has to be aware that when in doubt in case of an emergency, military deployment is also necessary to protect our interests." (The Local, May 27)

Köhler must have forgotten he wasn't speaking just to his CDU cronies. His lapse into truth stirred up a storm among the Social Democrats (SPD) and Greens back in Germany. They had been justifying German intervention in Afghanistan as necessary to defend Germany from "Islamic terrorism" as well as for the rights of Afghan girls and women to go to school.

Since the German participation in the attack on Yugoslavia in 1999, these parties have led Germany into wars carried out for alleged human rights. Köhler's remarks exposed their hypocrisy. So their leaders exploded in a spasm of criticism of the German president for speaking the truth in public.

Opposition SPD Speaker in Parliament Thomas Oppermann told newsmagazine Der Spiegel that Köhler was "damaging the acceptance of the Bundeswehr's foreign missions." Oppermann accused Köhler of "making the case of the Left party," the one party in Parliament that has consistently opposed the Afghan mission. The Bundeswehr is the German armed forces.

Köhler's remarks exposed the real reason Germany is shipping its young people to the mountains of Central Asia, 3,000 miles away. To fight for such a reason violates Germany's constitution. His words also opened a window on the whole mechanism of 21st century imperialism.

The big industrialized countries in Western Europe, North America and Japan, which are also the world's financial centers, exploit workers at home and all over the world. They superexploit workers and seize resources in oppressed countries — mostly former colonies of 19th and 20th century imperialism.

Economically, the rules for this trade and investment are set by the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the World Trade Organization and other institutions controlled by the same big powers.

Militarily, the Pentagon provides the main police force to keep the oppressed from rising up and taking back what has been and is being stolen from them, and to seize more land and open up more areas to invest.

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In second month and going strong

Puerto Rico student strike

By Berta Joubert-Ceci
San Juan, Puerto Rico

As a student strike at the University of Puerto Rico heads into its second month and has become a focus of class struggle on the island, Workers World/ Mundo Obrero Editor Berta Joubert-Ceci is sending us daily reports from San Juan. This article covers events from May 27 to 31.

WW PHOTO: BERTA JOUBERT-CECI

May 27 — University of Puerto Rico students, labor unions, the Socialist Students Union, the Committee against Homophobia and Discrimination, UPR high school students and others held a big demonstration today with a march from Munoz Rivera Park to Fortaleza — the governor's mansion.

Gov. Luis Fortuño held a news conference at the same time to present his hostile version of the strike to the public. The governor accused the students of being "violent." He also said that "external elements" — meaning the unions as well as left and pro-independence organizations that have been in solidarity with the strikers — should not "interfere." However, he withdrew the greater part of the heavy police presence from the campus. The students have been demanding this since the beginning.

Fortuño also nominated Episcopal Bishop David Alvarez to be an "impartial mediator" between the UPR Board of Trustees and the students' National Negotiating Committee, which represents all 11 campuses of the UPR system. However, the student committee rejected Alvarez as someone foreign to UPR issues.

May 29 — An email was circulated with a recent statement by Alvarez about the economic crisis in Puerto Rico. Revealing his anti-union bias, it said that "labor unions have turned into instruments for the enrichment of a few."

The Internet continues to be a main vehicle for organizing. Students post updates about the strike. On one site they list materials needed — ice, water, clothes, food items, etc. People check these sites and bring what the students need.

Many famous Puerto Rican singers have gotten together to film a recently composed "Song for the Students." It is a free download from the net.

May 29 — Angel Santos Rosa, former president of the union representing non-teaching workers at the university, is called "the chef" here because he makes really good dishes to serve to the students. Santos Rosa was cooking rice with chicken and beans in a huge pot, filling the air with the delicious smell of herbs and sweet peppers. It felt like home.

Santos Rosa is one of the many trade unionists staffing the "comfort tent" where strike supporters cook food and receive donations. The volunteers here send plates of hot food to the students inside, helping to establish the wonderful feeling of camaraderie that permeates this struggle.

People, particularly elders, go to the tent and sit down, sometimes just in silence, and are offered food and water. Students come by, sit down and eat or take several plates inside for the others. I asked who played a guitar that was sitting on one of the tables. At night, they said, students just relax, read, have discussions, play instruments, sing and recite poems.

The tent is staffed 24 hours. The people in charge had a list of items they needed, so we asked what was most urgent. They answered: "Plates to serve the food." So we bought a huge bag of Styrofoam plates, two big bags of chicken thighs and six cans of beans.

I left a copy each of the books "Low-Wage Capitalism" and "High Tech, Low Pay" along with several copies of Workers World newspaper for people to read while relaxing. When I told some of the students I would bring a solidarity banner, they immediately said: "We'll put it on the fence!" People driving by honk their horns in support.

May 30 — Sunday was mainly a rest day for the students. The main event was a concert this evening by famous Cuban singer Silvio Rodriguez at the Jose Miguel Agrelot Stadium. He issued a statement in solidarity with the students and dedicated a song to them. Students in the audience chanted slogans and displayed a banner: "Education is public."

Before the concert, the Committee in Solidarity with Cuba held a solidarity picket line in front of the stadium, as antirevolutionary Cubans had threatened to show up. Milagros Rivera, head of the committee and a member of the Broad Front of Solidarity and Struggle that encompasses militant unions and non-labor organizations, was one of several people handing out cards with information about Puerto Rican and Cuban political prisoners in the U.S.

Socialist Cuba and its popular organizations have been supportive of the student strike from day one.

May 31 — I went to the early shift (5 to 8 a.m.) at the Sociales Gate. Each gate around the UPR is named for the school closest to it — in this case, the School of Social Studies. All are barricaded from the inside by students to protect from a possible invasion by the police. Supporters from different organizations staff them around the clock.

The students have tight security. One making rounds on a bike stopped us because he had not gotten the message that we were going in. After establishing who we were, he let us go.

The students have done incredible work. They built a rudimentary shower in the middle of one of the parking lots. Tied bags of garbage and recyclables were awaiting collection.

They hold very democratic assemblies to discuss and plan strategies. They also show films and documentaries, hold meetings, play, have political discussions. In short, they have established a very lively city inside the campus.

I saw a very well-kept vegetable garden with cooking herbs, tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and even a sugarcane plant. Zchi Zchi Aslesha, the student who initiated the garden, said they wanted to show the people of PR that we can be self-sufficient in growing food. U.S. corporations have destroyed PR agriculture by making the island produce for export. Now most vegetables are imported.

To counteract the hostile campaign of the government and the UPR administration, the students called a press conference that was well attended by the media. Two representatives of the negotiating committee showed a PowerPoint presentation that documented how promises made by the UPR administration and the Board of Trustees in 2005 and 2007 not to raise tuition until 2012 have been broken. □

Afghanistan

Continued from page 8

While U.S. imperialists aim to always maintain global military supremacy they demand that West Europe and Japan pay part of the price in money and troops. Otherwise Germany, France, Britain, Japan, etc., lose their place at the table where Washington sits at the head.

The last few administrations' "Defense Strategy" papers openly declared the goal of U.S. supremacy. The latest one just released on May 27 by the Democratic administration repeated that goal. In keeping with U.S. hypocrisy, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton claimed that "U.S. values" were important. Replace "values" with "profits" and it rings truer.

"Stopping the Taliban," "stopping terror," and "women's rights" are all public relations smoke to hide the real reason that Germany, some other European powers and the U.S. government send their young people to kill and die in Afghanistan. The real reasons are to gain markets for investment to exploit more workers, control resources, expand trade, enforce submission in the region and keep the profits rolling in to the banks. □

Puerto Rican fighter for independence

Carlos Alberto Torres is granted parole

Special to Workers World

Carlos Alberto Torres, 57, has spent most of his life in U.S. prisons. He organized and fought for the independence of Puerto Rico. For this, he was found guilty by a U.S. court of conspiracy to overthrow the U.S. government.

The National Boricua Human Rights Network and the Human Rights Committee of Puerto Rico broke the news on May 21 that Torres has finally been granted parole. The release said he has served 30 years in U.S. prisons "for his commitment to the independence of his nation." Torres is expected to be released in July of this year, and will live in Puerto Rico.

The statement continued, "This historic release is due to Carlos Alberto's maintaining his integrity and commitment throughout three decades behind bars, and to the support of the people of Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican communities in the U.S., as well as those who support human rights throughout the world. This broad support was key in winning his release, and he is looking forward to expressing his gratitude in person."

According to the ProLibertad Freedom Campaign, prosecutors had charged Torres with being a leader of the FALN — Puerto Rican Armed Forces of National Liberation — and put him on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List.

Torres was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico — a town where, in 1937, police had fired on demonstrators calling for independence and killed 19 people. The Ponce Massacre was ordered by the U.S. colonial governor of Puerto Rico at the time, Blanton Winship. It is commemorated every year in political and cultural events and demonstrations.

Torres' parents moved from Ponce to New York and finally Chicago. He studied sociology at Southern Illinois University and the University of Illinois at Chicago, where he was involved in struggles to recruit more Latinos/as to the university and against racism and police abuse. He was one of the founders of the Rafael Cancel Miranda Puerto Rican High School, now known as the Dr. Pedro Albizu Campos Puerto Rican High School. He also participated in the Committee to Free the Five Nationalists — Puerto Ricans who dared to carry out an attack on the U.S. Congress in 1950 when it voted down independence for the colony.

Many Puerto Ricans took inspiration from the Cuban Revolution of 1959, where the armed guerrilla struggle in the neighboring Caribbean island successfully overthrew a U.S.-backed dictator and was rapidly moving to build a socialist society.

The FALN in the 1970s and 1980s carried out attacks on U.S. corporations and political offices, mostly in the United States. Fourteen Puerto Ricans, including Torres, were arrested and convicted of conspiracy for the attacks.

In the fall of 1999, in response to mass outcry, President Bill Clinton pardoned 11 of the accused FALN prisoners. However, Torres received no pardon, and as a result has spent another 11 years in prison.

Two more Puerto Rican national liberation fighters, Oscar Lopez Rivera and Avelino Gonzalez Claudio, remain in prison for the "crime" of fighting to free their colonized homeland. □

WORKERS WORLD editorial

A crisis for women with children

While the capitalist economic crisis has severely hit millions of workers in the U.S., low-wage women workers, especially mothers, face an extra set of problems.

Since the recession began, 2.6 million women have lost their jobs. The official unemployment rate for women who head households (85 percent of single-parent households), has hit a high of 11.3 percent. This doesn't count women who need full-time work but either have to settle for fewer hours and lower pay or have given up looking for a job.

Before the recession more than a third of woman-headed families were poor already. But now their conditions are even worse, as employers so often lay women off first and hire them last. Before the recession, even subsidized child care was beyond the reach of most needy families. As women workers face having their hours cut, are demoted into involuntary part-time jobs or furloughs, and lose other income, subsidized day care becomes a necessity for more poor families. Chief among these are the families of African-American women and Latinas, who are among the lowest-paid workers.

There are some federal subsidies for child care. However, more than 13 states, claiming budget deficits, have recently scaled back crucial subsidized child-care programs, decreased their allotments, or put the children on lengthy waiting lists. Because of these cutbacks, women can lose their jobs and also face big obstacles trying to look for work in a tough job market. Without someone to provide child care, they can't work; their children need them. Without subsidies, child-care costs are prohibitively high — up to one-third of a poor family's budget

"For a single mom," says the National Women's Law Center, "it's a lottery in many states whether she gets child care or not."

After President Bill Clinton in 1996 signed the so-called welfare reform bill, saying the U.S. would "end welfare as we know it," many single mothers, dropped from essential public assistance programs and left with no safety net, were told to go to work, allegedly with a proviso of government-subsidized child care.

But this means nothing when local governments are slashing child-care subsidies for poor families. The 1996 welfare law included a five-year lifetime limit on cash assistance, which in some states is even reduced to a two- or three-year limit. Many unemployed women have no recourse to public assistance, even in a recession. Because states won't loosen these restrictions, public assistance enrollment has gone up less than 10 percent since the layoffs began, despite the enormous need.

While the media so often blame the women, it's the capitalist system that is to blame. Wall Street, the banks and the corporations have to reel in their profits, no matter the human cost. If there's a financial crisis, the government rescues the super-rich. There's no austerity expected of them. Austerity measures are reserved for workers and poor people. Instead of being rescued, they keep on losing jobs, homes and essential services, including child care.

Take California, where Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger proposes cutting most child-care subsidies. Under his plan, up to 240,000 children would lose day care while 130,000 providers or teachers would lose jobs. Yet at the same time the governor would give $2.1 billion in tax breaks to his corporate cronies, without requiring job creation.

Just 90 miles from Big Business' rule is a country where workers' needs come first. In socialist Cuba, housing, education, employment, health care and child-care are inherent human rights — even during a worldwide capitalist crisis.

Despite the U.S. blockade, Cuba has increased the social programs that serve its people. During the 1990s, Cuba expanded funding for health and education and established universal preschool education programs. The Early Education System, for children ages 0-6, is part of the extensive National Education System provided under the Ministry of Education.

Moreover, the Cuban Constitution guarantees women workers equal rights in all spheres, including employment. It ensures paid maternity leave along with day care from infancy to school age. Single mothers receive special benefits.

Only 90 miles from the reign of rapacious capitalism is a socialist country where the needs of women and children take top priority. □

After Israeli attack on aid convoy

Continued from page 1

tons of humanitarian aid, including medical and construction supplies. Representing 40 different countries, participants in the international delegation included 85-year-old Holocaust survivor Hedy Epstein, and government diplomats from various countries.

Some 70 miles off the Israeli coast, Israeli naval vessels and a helicopter surrounded the convoy on May 31. In an act of piracy, heavily masked Israeli commandoes slid down ropes from helicopters onto the largest of the six convoy ships. Journalists aboard the ship reported that the troops started firing before they even touched down. Reports also note that passengers aboard the ship were waving white flags at the time of the invasion.

Huwaida Arraf, a Free Gaza Movement leader, told the New York Times: "We communicated to [the Israeli Defense Forces] clearly that we are unarmed civilians. We asked them not to use violence."

In an absurd propaganda spin, the Israeli Defense Forces claimed that upon boarding the ship, the IDF naval soldiers were met with "live fire and weaponry including knives and clubs," forcing them to use what they called "riot dispersal means." Suggesting that the activists did not have the right to defend themselves against the attack, the military reports the wounding of four Israeli soldiers as justification for the slaying of innocent civilians aboard the ship. Danny Ayalon, Israeli deputy foreign minister, also claimed at a press conference that "the organizers are well known for their ties to global jihad, Al Qaeda and Hamas."

According to reports, the Israeli navy seized all six ships and, after telling the press the ships would be taken to Ashdod, towed them to Haifa to avoid scrutiny. Meanwhile, all other participants aboard the ship have been imprisoned or deported.

Worldwide protests condemn massacre

Protests broke out around the world in condemnation of the massacre. Massive rallies took place in Turkey, where protesters attempted to storm the Israeli consulate in Istanbul. Demonstrations were held in Cyprus, Iraq, Norway, Sweden and in Paris, Rome and more than 20 cities in Greece.

In the U.S. emergency protests were held May 31 in cities throughout the country in spite of the Memorial Day holiday. Protesters denounced the U.S. for providing military and other material support to client-state Israel, allowing it to carry out such atrocities. The Obama administration has pledged at least $30 billion in military aid to Israel over the next 10 years.

Turkey's government, which had in large part sponsored the flotilla, immediately recalled its ambassador from Israel and requested an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that was held on May 31. Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan called the incident "state terrorism."

Other governments were forced to respond as well. Both Turkey and Greece canceled joint military exercises it had planned with Israel, and Israeli envoys were summoned by the governments of Turkey, Egypt, Jordan and several European countries in protest of the attack.

Murat Mercan, the head of the Turkish Grand National Assembly's foreign affairs commission, noted on television, "We are going to see in the following days whether Israel has done it as a display of decisiveness or to commit political suicide." (New York Times, May 31)

The response from the U.S. was far milder. After a June 1 meeting in Washington between President Barack Obama and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was canceled, the New York Times reported that rather than expressing condemnation of the raid, the White House "released a statement saying that President Obama had spoken with Mr. Netanyahu and understood his need to return immediately to Israel. In addition to regrets about the loss of life, 'the president also expressed the importance of learning all the facts and circumstances around this morning's tragic events as soon as possible,' the statement said." (May 31)

Free Palestine!

A recent World Health Organization report states that the health of Gaza's population continues to deteriorate as a result of the Israeli blockade — a form of collective punishment unleashed by Israel after Hamas took electoral power in the area.

WHO notes acute shortages of cooking gas, fuel and other basic necessities in Gaza and states that 98 percent of industrial operations have been shut down since 2007. A ban on the import of building materials means that some 6,400 homes destroyed by Israel's 2008-2009 bombings have not been rebuilt. The same military operation destroyed water and sanitation infrastructure that Gazans have also been unable to repair. (IRIN, May 18)

The report shows 56 percent of Gazans living below the poverty level in the third quarter of 2008, with chronic malnutrition at 10.2 percent. However, the situation is not much better for the rest of Palestine, with 51 percent of all Palestinians living below the poverty level in the same period.

The continued attacks on the Palestinian people and their steadfast allies will only increase the call for boycott, divestment and sanctions against Israel. This most recent atrocity exposes not only the ruthlessness of the settler Israeli state — and the U.S. as its sponsor — but also shows the steadfastness and determination of people around the world to free Palestine. □

MUNDO OBRERO

Crece la resistencia contra la ley racista de Arizona

Jóvenes, inmigrantes e indígenas lideran las actividades de resistencia

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vez que se hacen las demandas en el béisbol de Grandes Ligas para mover el juego "Las Estrellas" del 2011 fuera de Phoenix.

En las calles de Tucson las protestas continúan. Con la aprobación de la anti-étnica ley de estudios HB 2281, las protestas estudiantiles siguen teniendo manifestaciones y plantones exigiendo el derecho de aprender su propia historia. El 17 de mayo, un grupo de estudiantes indocumentados públicamente protagonizaron una sentada frente a las oficinas del Senador John McCain para exigir la aprobación de la DREAM Act, una propuesta estancada del Congreso que ofrece la legalización de algunos/as jóvenes indocumentados/as.

Los/as estudiantes de manera desafiante anunciaron su condición de indocumentados/as y se negaron a dejar las oficinas de McCain hasta que él presionara para la aprobación de la Ley DREAM. Los/as estudiantes fueron detenidos/as y corren el riesgo de ser deportados/as, pero su acción desencadenó acciones similares por estudiantes en California, Nueva York y otros lugares.

El 21 de mayo, activistas indígenas de la Nación Tohono O'odham ocuparon la sede de la Patrulla Fronteriza de Tucson que se encuentra en la Base Aérea Davis-Monthan. Los activistas se encadenaron a las estructuras de la oficina de la Patrulla Fronteriza e interrumpieron las operaciones llamando la atención sobre la continua guerra contra los pueblos indígenas y el desprecio por la soberanía nacional y las culturas indígenas que libra el Departamento de Seguridad Nacional de los EEUU (DHS).

La Nación Tohono O'odham se encuentra en el sur de Arizona y se extiende hasta México. Durante siglos el pueblo O'odham ha vivido en estas tierras, incluso mucho antes de que existiera un EEUU, un México, o una frontera de cualquier tipo. DHS decidió ampliar el muro fronterizo que separa a México de los EEUU a través de tierras del pueblo O'odham, dividiendo a la nación en el medio. Además, los tres caminos en el lado estadounidense que proporcionan acceso a la nación tienen puestos de control y los agentes federales patrullan la zona. La militarización de las tierras indígenas y la intrusión y el acoso por parte de agentes federales se ha vuelto intolerable.

Valientes acciones como éstas van a continuar. Llamados a un "Verano de Liberación de Arizona", están atrayendo apoyo mientras activistas por todo el país traman una estrategia para galvanizar a todos/as los/as afectados/as y a sus partidarios en un movimiento unificado y militante que pueda derrotar la ley SB 1070 y la agenda racista, anti-inmigrante y derechista que produjo la SB 1070.

Teitelbaum es un coordinador de la Coalición 1ro de Mayo de Tucson pro Derechos de los/as Trabajadores/as e Inmigrantes.

Boycott, divest, sanctions!

Protests erupt against Israeli crimes at sea

By John Catalinotto

Israeli troops' criminal actions aboard the Turkish Mavi Marmara, killing at least nine of the anti-blockade activists and wounding dozens, in turn released a storm of sympathy worldwide for those on the Freedom Flotilla and for the Palestinians caught in Gaza behind the Israeli blockade.

The Israeli military's crimes during its invasion of Gaza 17 months ago had already aroused worldwide sensitivity toward Gaza's population and increased hostility toward the Israeli state. This gave birth to a widespread movement to boycott Israeli goods, force institutions public and private to divest funds from Israeli companies or government bonds, and demand that international bodies impose sanctions.

The attack late on May 30 sparked this movement into action. Throughout the Middle East in Arab and other Muslim countries there was an immediate response. In Istanbul by the morning of May 31 thousands of people were besieging the Israeli consulate in that city, conscious of the great popular support in Turkey for the Flotilla.

Soon, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan was making a speech not only hostile to Israel but critical of U.S. President Barack Obama for failing to condemn Israel's action. Up to recently, Turkey's military has cooperated with Israel.

The Egyptian regime, which had also been enforcing the blockade of Gaza at its border with the narrow strip of land, opened up the crossing during the day for the immediate future.

There were immediate response demonstrations in Amman, Jordan; Damascus, Syria; and Beirut, Lebanon; there were also protests in Baghdad, Iraq. Militant street actions took place in Islamabad and Karachi, Pakistan, where the U.S. is using drones in an unpopular battle with the Pashtun people in the regions bordering Afghanistan.

Within the Israeli state itself, there were demonstrations protesting the attack in Ashkhod, Haifa, Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Widespread response in Western Europe

Groups in solidarity with Palestine were joined by many people just horrified by the slaughter as they came out on both May 31 and June 1 to protest the Israeli role and to once again demand that a strong movement continue the fight to boycott, divest and sanction Israel.

In Athens, Greece, thousands of demonstrators battled with police, chanting, "Hands off Gaza!" and "Free Palestine!" Some 5,000 people marched in Stockholm, Sweden, chanting, "Boycott Israel!" and holding banners reading, "Put Israel on Trial" and "Israel to The Hague," referring to the International Court. (Reuters, June 1) There were two protests in Brussels, Belgium, on May 31 and one in The Hague, Netherlands.

In Italy there were demonstrations held in 25 cities on May 31 and another five the following day. These were not only in the major cities like Rome, Milan, Genoa and Turin, but also in smaller cities like Catania in Sicily. Some 2,000 people came out in Paris, France. In Spain there were demonstrations in 26 cities in the two days, including Madrid, Barcelona, Bilbao, Coruña, Gijón and Las Palmas.

In Britain there was an immediate response on May 31 in front of the prime minister's residence, where hundreds protested, and the movement there has called a national demonstration for June 5.

In Berlin, Germany, more than 600 demonstrated in front of the Israeli Embassy in a protest that included Palestinians, Turks, Israelis, Germans, and some from the U.S. and other countries. Another demonstration is planned in front of the German Foreign Office. There was a spontaneous demonstration of about 120 people in Hamburg, and a rally in Munich. Demonstrations were set for another 10 cities on June 1 and 2.

In Vienna, Austria, a demonstration took place on June 1 before the Israeli Embassy.

Reports from activists around the world continue to arrive, in addition to many political statements supporting the Palestinians in Gaza and the activists on the Freedom Flotilla, from progressive groups in the Philippines, Malaysia and throughout Latin America. It gives the appearance that there will be a worldwide movement of the kind that had an impact on apartheid South Africa, making it a pariah state and contributing to the downfall of this repressive regime. □

Iraq anti-war conference to go on despite Spanish gov't

By John Catalinotto

Groups opposing the U.S. occupation of Iraq say they will go on with a conference set for mid-June despite the Spanish government's reversal of earlier promises to issue visas to Iraqi participants.

The Spanish Campaign against the Occupation and for the Sovereignty of Iraq (CEOSI) announced on May 29 that the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation had informed them in essence that it would give no support to activities planned in Gijón and Madrid between June 18 and 21 at the "International Conference of the Iraqi Political Resistance: Iraq, sovereignty and democratic reconstruction."

Essentially, this means the Spanish foreign ministry is reversing earlier promises to issue visas to Iraqis to enter Spain and participate in the conference. CEOSI notes that these invited Iraqis are all representatives of anti-occupation Iraqi organizations or legitimate representatives of Iraqi communities and that many have previously received Spanish visas. In addition, the new visas had been agreed upon in discussions earlier in the year when CEOSI agreed to postpone the conference from March to June.

The conference has been aimed at bringing four of the major Iraqi anti-occupation fronts together outside of Iraq, along with individuals and organizations from Europe and the United States, including Iraqi exiles, who are known in the anti-war movement and who support Iraqi sovereignty and have been working to end the occupation. According to CEOSI, "the highest representatives of the main anti-occupation Iraqi political and civilian groups" had committed to coming, including from the Nationalist and Islamic Patriotic Front, the Association of Muslim Scholars, the Political Council of the Iraqi Resistance and the Iraqi National Foundation Congress.

The conference will be organized with the collaboration of the Damascus-based Independence Study Center, whose president is Khalid Al-Maani. Personalities and representatives from the U.S., Europe and Arab world organizations, such as former United Nations official Hans von Sponeck — who resigned after seeing how the 1990-2003 blockade was killing hundreds of thousands of Iraqis — and U.S.-based human rights activist Ramsey Clark, will also attend.

The Spanish Foreign Ministry claims its reversal is based on a request from the Iraqi interim government led by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki to stop the Iraqis from entering and to turn them over to his regime. Some in the anti-war movement believe the heavier pressure on the Spanish government comes from Washington, especially since the Iraqi occupation regime owes its existence and its continuation in power to the U.S. occupation.

The groups among the conference invitees — taken together — are much more legitimate representatives of the Iraqi population than the regime in Baghdad.

CEOSI, with the assistance of others supporting the conference, is continuing the struggle to obtain visas and to receive guarantees from the Spanish Foreign Ministry that the government will provide adequate protection to the Iraqi guests. The group said in its May 29 statement that it "reiterates its commitment to hold its initiative and will evaluate with its Iraqi, European and U.S. partners the situation created by the decision of the Spanish Government, studying the possible alternatives with the collaborating institutions of the Principality of the Government of Asturias and City Council of Gijón."

For more information in Spanish, Arabic and English see iraqsolidaridad.org

Catalinotto has been invited to the conference to represent the International Action Center.

Haitian community thanks Cuba for aid

Both before and after the Jan. 12 earthquake, Cuban doctors and nurses have provided free and greatly appreciated medical care to the Haitian people at the invitation of the Haitian government.

To show the appreciation of the Haitian community in New York City, Haïti-Liberté, a newspaper published in Brooklyn but distributed in the Haitian diaspora as well as in Haiti, held a reception and video showing at their office on May 29, followed by a speech by the Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations, Pedro Nuñez Mosquera, with microphone.

The video "Fireflies in the Night/Luciénagas en la noche" focuses on the work that students and graduates of Cuba's Latin American School of Medicine (Escuela Latinoamericana de Medicina — ELAM) are doing in the tent/tarp camps that shelter about 1 million Haitians still living on the streets four months after the quake.

— Report and photo by G. Dunkel

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Maniobras de Corea del Sur y EEUU amenazan con guerra a Corea del Norte

Por Deirdre Griswold

Fue una trama preparada por el gobierno de los EEUU y el régimen derechista de Corea del Sur, aumentada entusiasmadamente por los medios corporativos.

El 26 de marzo de este año, un buque de guerra de la Armada de Corea del Sur, el Cheonan, se hundió cerca de la frontera marítima con la República Popular Democrática de Corea. De los 104 miembros de la tripulación a bordo, 46 murieron.

Casi inmediatamente, el gobierno de Lee Myung-bak en el sur acusó a la RPDC de haber torpedeado el buque.

Un equipo "internacional" de investigación fue organizado. Básicamente, se trataba de un equipo integrado por EEUU, que ocupa militarmente a Corea del Sur con cerca de 30.000 soldados, y el régimen de Lee. Gran Bretaña y Australia, aliadas muy cercanas de los EEUU, fueron agregadas para hacerlo un poco más sustancial. Este grupo llegó a la conclusión inevitable de que ciertamente, el buque había sido hundido por un submarino de la RPDC. Voces escépticas se oyeron en Corea del Sur, pero fueron acalladas rápidamente por los medios de comunicación.

Posteriormente, China expresó su escepticismo de que un submarino RPDC hubiera hundido el barco de Corea del Sur, pero su escepticismo recibió poca publicidad aquí.

La RPDC negó cualquier participación y acusó al régimen de Lee de tratar de torpedear los acuerdos realizados hace algunos años entre el norte y el sur que habían mejorado las relaciones entre las dos Coreas. También anunció que enviaría un equipo de su Consejo de Defensa Nacional para examinar la "evidencia" que el sur afirmaba tener.

Como se acercaba una reunión importante entre China y EEUU sobre la seguridad y las cuestiones económicas, los medios de comunicación occidentales comenzaron a centrarse en cómo la Secretaria de Estado Hillary Clinton comenzaba a buscar apoyo para imponer sanciones de la ONU sobre la RPDC y que lo plantearía con fuerza en Pekín.

El 24 de mayo, el mismo día en que la reunión entre EEUU y China estaba comenzando, el Secretario General Ban Ki-moon, ex canciller de Corea del Sur, salió en defensa de las sanciones contra la RPDC y dijo que los resultados de la investigación "internacional" no estaban en disputa.

Las maniobras diplomáticas estaban acompañadas de amenazas militares contra la RPDC. El mismo día de la declaración de Ban Ki-moon, el ministro de Asuntos Exteriores y Comercio de Corea del Sur Yu Myung Hwan, el ministro de Defensa Nacional Kim Tae-young, y el ministro de Unificación Hyun In-taek, celebraron una conferencia de prensa conjunta en Seúl. Anunciaron que el gobierno de Corea del Sur prohibiría a todos los buques de la RPDC entrar en sus aguas territoriales. También dijeron que ellos y la Marina estadounidense proseguirían con un masivo ejercicio "anti-submarino" conjunto en la zona.

Es evidente que los submarinos de los EEUU que merodean los mares alrededor de Corea no serían el blanco de este movimiento militar.

El régimen de Lee dijo que también prohibiría el comercio con el norte y limitaría aún más los viajes allá. También reanudaría la propaganda anti-RPDC desde los altavoces de altos decibeles cerca de la zona desmilitarizada que divide a Corea.

El régimen de Corea del Sur también rechazó la solicitud del Consejo Nacional de Defensa de la RPDC para que un equipo de investigadores del norte examinara las pruebas que supuestamente justifican esta peligrosa escalada de tensiones en la península coreana.

El legado de la división de Corea

El peligro de una confrontación militar en la península coreana ha existido desde que Corea fue dividida después de la Segunda Guerra Mundial. Estados Unidos estableció una dictadura títere en el sur, que era ferozmente hostil a las fuerzas comunistas del norte que luchando junto a las tropas soviéticas, había derrotado a las fuerzas de ocupación de Japón a finales de la guerra.

Kim Il Sung, el líder del ejército de liberación, era un revolucionario. Representaba un movimiento social que fomentaba que el pueblo derrocara a los terratenientes, comerciantes y oficiales menores que habían cooperado con Japón durante su periodo de dominio colonial sobre Corea, el cual duró desde 1910 al 1945.

Era diferente en el sur, que estaba ocupado por tropas estadounidenses a finales de la guerra. De hecho, allí Estados Unidos rearmó a las tropas japonesas bajo su comandancia para impedir que se esparciera la revolución. Instaló un gobierno encabezado por coreanos que tenían la voluntad de cooperar con explotadores extranjeros — fueran imperialistas japoneses o estadounidenses. La dictadura de Syngman Rhee efectuó masacres de simpatizantes del movimiento revolucionario que buscaba liberar todo Corea.

Mientras que el norte se desarrollaba como una sociedad socialista, el sur fue conducido a la economía capitalista mundial como un vasallo de los Estados Unidos. Las tropas soviéticas salieron del norte después de tres años, pero Estados Unidos nunca ha terminado de ocupar el sur.

Del 1950 al 1953, cuando EEUU libró una guerra total contra la Corea socialista, un millón de voluntarios chinos vinieron a ayudar a sus vecinos. Justo después de haber ganado su propia lucha de liberación, ellos combatieron para impedir el regreso de los terribles días de dominación imperialista.

China y Corea

Quizás el establecimiento estadounidense de política exterior pensaba que esta historia estaba olvidada en China cuando mandó a Hillary Clinton y su séquito para tratar de intimidar o engatusar a los líderes chinos para que se suscribieran a la campaña contra la RPDC de Washington-Seúl. Pero un informe del 25 de mayo en el New York Times indica lo contrario.

Dice que después de que concluyeron las reuniones EEUU-China, Estados Unidos "había hecho poco progreso en cuanto a ganar el respaldo de China para las medidas internacionales contra Corea del Norte por el hundimiento de un buque de guerra de Corea del Sur" y que "no había una probabilidad inmediata de una resolución del Consejo de Seguridad de la ONU para condenar el ataque". China, como uno de los cinco miembros permanentes del Consejo de Seguridad, tendría el poder de veto a tal resolución.

El reporte también aceptaba que el gobierno chino "había expresado escepticismo" sobre la responsabilidad de la RPDC por el hundimiento.

Esta fue la primera vez que los medios masivos estadounidenses habían concedido la posibilidad de que la noticia no fuera cierta.

Sin embargo, esto no significa que Washington o Seúl estén listos a abandonar sus esfuerzos diplomáticos o militares contra la RPDC. Sus ejercicios militares conjuntos siguen en la agenda.

Como respuesta, la RPDC ha anunciado que está cortando todos los lazos con el sur y está prohibiendo que todos los buques y aviones del sur entren en el espacio marino y aéreo del norte. También acusó al sur de cometer "actos provocativos", incluyendo la intrusión de docenas de buques de guerra en sus mares territoriales desde el 14 hasta el 24 de mayo.

Los/as trabajadores/as en los Estados Unidos necesitan resistir la lluvia de propaganda contra la RPDC que no es más que un preludio de actos agresivos contra ese país. Deben recordar cómo Washington compuso un guion semejante como preparativo de la invasión de Irak. Hoy esos cuentos inventados de "armas de destrucción masiva" no tienen ningún peso, pero la guerra ocurrió de todos modos, con todas sus horribles consecuencias. No debe pasar de nuevo. □

Crece la resistencia contra la ley racista de Arizona

Jóvenes, inmigrantes e indígenas lideran las actividades de resistencia

Por Paul Teitelbaum
Tucson, Arizona

El impulso aumentaba para la marcha nacional para detener la SB 1070 que se celebraría el 29 de mayo en Phoenix. La marcha demanda la derogación de la medida "Muéstrame tus papeles" de la ley SB 1070 de Arizona y el final a los ataques racistas contra lo/as inmigrantes y de culparles por los problemas económicos y sociales que en realidad se derivan de la crisis económica capitalista.

La marcha hacia el Capitolio estatal y la concentración serían continuadas el 30 de mayo con foros comunitarios y sesiones de estrategia para la construcción de un movimiento contra la ofensiva racista. A raíz de la medida SB 1070 de Arizona, por lo menos otros 10 estados están preparados para introducir leyes similares.

La aprobación de la ley SB 1070 por la Legislatura del estado a fines de abril desató una tormenta continua de protestas y resistencia. La Campaña "Boicot Arizona" sigue creciendo y los jefes de Arizona ya han sentido el impacto. La gobernadora Jan Brewer está luchando para "cambiar la imagen de Arizona" y ha creado un grupo de trabajo encargado de responder al boicot. (azcentral.com, 13 de mayo)

El equipo deportivo Diamondbacks de Arizona, cuyos propietarios son los principales contribuyentes a las arcas de los que impulsaron esta ley, se enfrentan con protestas en cada ciudad que visitan. La intensa presión sigue aumentando a la

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